

My name is Matthew Narducci. I live in Pawcatuck, CT. I write in full support of HB 6517. I am a junior in high school. I have always had a hard time in school. I learn best with small groups or 1:1 with teachers. In middle school I was in trouble all the time. I think I had 50 detentions and at least 5 suspensions. I had no idea what was going on in the classroom. A few teachers were really mean to me. I was mean back. A few were really nice and we got along really well. I still appreciate those teachers. I was trying to hide that I could not read by misbehaving. I actually really did not know I could not read, I just knew nothing made sense and seemed stupid. At the end of grade 8, I had more testing done. It felt like the 100th time. This time it was done in Norwich and I was found to have dyslexia which affected reading, writing and math. I had a second grade reading level even though I had mostly B's on my report card. There was a meeting and the next thing I knew I was sent away to a boarding school for kids with ADD and dyslexia. It was very hard on me and on my parents, but there were no schools locally that had what I needed, because I was so far behind in reading.

There were some good and some bad things about going to that school. The good thing was I learned to read and I made good connections with teachers and peers. Everyday I practiced writing and they taught me how sounds and letters went together. I learned structured word inquiry, which I hated, but it helped. I remember asking my mom why no one ever taught me how reading worked before. I still don't like reading, but I am better at it than I was before.

Presently, I am at home working to finish high school. I want to go into a trade program because I work well with my hands. My parents are really supportive of this which I appreciate. I think if I had been identified with dyslexia (my older sister has it too) when I was younger then maybe I would not hate school and maybe there would not have been so many ups and downs in my life.

Teachers really need to learn how to figure out if a kid has dyslexia. It is not fair to us and it is not fair to them. All the teachers I was bad for did not know I learned differently. All the teachers who were nice and tried to get to know me saw I was a good kid, but they still did not know I had dyslexia. They did

make me feel better though. All the teachers who knew how to teach kids with dyslexia how to read made a huge difference. I think all teachers should know how to do this. Maybe kids would be better in school and be more successful.

Respectfully,
Matthew Narducci